Free and compulsory education for children upto 14 years in the country

*126. DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY:
SHRI CHANDRIKA PRASAD TRIPATHI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any time bound programme has been chalked out to achieve the goal of providing free and compulsory education for all children upto 14 years in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) and (b) Keeping in view Article 45 of the Constitution regarding free and compulsory education to all children till they complete 14 years of age, the National Policy on Education (1986) reiterates the resolve in following terms:—

> "It shall be ensured that all children who attain the age of about 11 years by 1990 will have had five years of schooling, or if equivalent through the non-formal stream. Likewise, by 1995 all children will be provided free and compulsory education upto 14 years of age."

2. The Programme of Action (POA) drawn up to operationalise National Policy on Education spells out the various strategies to achieve the goal of universalisation of primary|elementary education. They are:—

(i) Adoption of a child-centred and activity-based process of learning at the primary stage by reform in the process and content of learning.

(ii) Provision of primary schools within easy walking distance of all habitation with a population of 300 or more (200 in the case of hilly. tribal and desert areas).

(iii) Improvement of physical facilities in primary schools through a programme called "Operation Blackboard".

(iv) Strengthening and expansion of the programme of Non-formal Education so as to cover children who cannot attend whole-day schools, working children, dropout and children from habitations without schools.

(v) Genuine mobilisation and participatory involvement of the teachers and the community in the educational process.

(vi) Strengthening of the supervisory machinery and decentralisation of administration down to the block level.

(vii) Strengthening of the teacher education system and a large programme of in-service and continuing education of elementary school teachers and NFE Personnel through District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and otherwise.

(viii) Laying down of minimum levels of learning for the primary and upper primary stage, and continuous and comprehensive evaluation of learners.

(ix) Special attention to the needs of first generation leaners and provision of suitable incentives| arrangements for girls and children of disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Tribes and the handicapped.

(x) Re-fashioning of the monitoring system so as to meaningfully monitor progress towards universa-duled Castes|Schedulel Tribes and cation.

3. During the 7th Plan the Central and State Governments have taken several steps as per the above mentioned strategies. Important among the programmes brought under implementation by the Central Govern-

ment to support the States for facilitating faster achievement of the goal of universal elementary education are Operation Blackboard Revised scheme of Teacher Education. The Scheme of Teacher Education. The Scheme of Operation Blackboard seeks to bring about a qualitative improvement in all primary schools in the country by provision of all-weather buildings, sufficient instructional materials and at least two teachers. The Scheme of Non-Formal Education has been reorganised and expanded to provide education of a quality comparable to that of formal schools to those children who cannot attend formal schools e.g. the working children, girls who cannot attend whole-day schools and school drop-outs. The Scheme of Teacher Education provides for District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) to bring about improvement in the educational competence of teachers by continuous teacher education through pre-service and in-service training.

Talks between Foreign Ministers of Indian and Bangladesh regarding Sri Lanka issue

*127. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what was the gist of the discussions held between the visiting Bangladesh Foreign Minister and our Minister of External Affairs on July 7 at Delhi; what were Bangladesh Minister's pleas or contentions about Sri Lanka and our Government's response thereto; and

(b) what are Bangladesh's views about Sri Lanka's action in trying to wreck SAARC by boycotting its meetings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) and (b) The discussions during the Bangladesh Foreign Minister's visit centred around the need to ensure that SAARC does not suffer as a result of Sri Lanka's decision to stay away from the meeting of the Council of Ministers. India and Bangladesh agreed that as provided under the SAARC Charter, bilateral and contentious issues had no place in SAARC.

There was also some discussion about bilateral matters. We stated our serious concern at the continuing influx of Chakma refugees into India.

Involvement of Indian Airlines and Air India employees in smuggling activities

*128. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of cases involving employees/officials of Indian Airlines and Air India (including crew members) in smuggling of gold and narcotics are on the increase during the last few years;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and year-wise number of such employees/officials/crew members of Indian Airlines and Air India separately, reported to be involved in such activities during each of the last three years;

(c) what is the number of those found guilty and action taken against each of them as on 31st March, 1989; and

(d) what are the details of the preventive steps Government have taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) No, Sir. There is no significant increase in the number of cases of smuggling activities in